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Forbidden Realms

Okay, got it



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# The Insanity of Geometry

## How to Free Yourself from Euclidean Space



It's a modern cliché to say that geniuses who play with crayons can't seem to stay inside the lines. But what do we really mean when we say that? Do we mean that geniuses are simply badasses who "cross the line" and break the rules? Or is it that they know something about lines that the rest of us don't?



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To my mind, true geniuses are those who set aside their coloring books and draw their own pictures. Not only that, but geniuses are able to draw pictures *without using any lines at all*. This is exactly what my art professor back in college would get his students to do. Every week, he would stand behind us while we worked, and he'd repeat his singsong mantra: "I don't want to see any lines..."

The effect was mind-altering. Our drawing class met only once per week, so it was three hours long. When class ended, however, it seemed as though I'd been standing behind the easel for only thirty minutes.

How does this shift in space-time awareness happen?

Well, first of all, how does one draw a picture without using lines? When you use white paper and a simple graphite pencil, the first bad habit you're confronted with is drawing a line around the edge of each shape. The professor didn't allow us to do that, so we were forced to simply begin shading right away. To indicate the edges of the apples and pears in a still life, the only trick we were allowed to use was a contrast between darker and lighter shades of gray.

Surrendering to this way of drawing involved surrendering to reality just as it is: a world without lines. Who would have thought that such stark realism could make time disappear?

It's not rocket science, really. Anything but. All we need to do is look closely at this curious entity known as the line, and we can begin to see through the rigid geometry that it creates all around us. We can see through the boxes, bubbles, and categories that civilization is imposing on us. And when we can see through civilization's linear "Matrix," the mental tools of civilization's geometry become all the more powerful in our hands.

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*matrix*: "something shaped like a pattern of lines and spaces".... "a rectangular array of mathematical elements...".... "something resembling a mathematical matrix especially in rectangular arrangement of elements into rows and columns".... "the natural material in which something is embedded"

— Merriam-Webster.com

*“The soul of the world cannot be found in philosophy, nor in the humanities, nor in mathematics, nor even in science. It resides some place else. Some place the linear mind cannot go.”*

— Stephen Harrod Buhner

### Seeing Through the Matrix

What I’m saying here sounds simple enough, right? Not necessarily. Civilized adults suffer from a kind of insanity that is not always so easily cured. This insanity is not immediately noticeable because it is considered normal for most human beings. It’s a collective, delusional psychosis that’s especially evident as you walk through the heart of downtown in a big city. The streets are laid out on a grid. The buildings are essentially giant rectangular boxes. The roofs of the residential houses are like triangles. The lightbulbs that float above you are like spheres. The trash cans along the sidewalks are cylinders. Everything presents the appearance of life safely contained inside a superimposed system of linear geometry. It’s as though no one was paying attention in art class.

The term “geometry” comes from the Greek *geometría*, which literally means “to measure the Earth.” The original purpose of geometry, of *measuring* things, does not pose much of an issue. The real insanity begins, I think, with a mathematician who lived in ancient Alexandria: Euclid. Euclid is often heralded as the father of geometry, but it has become evident that he took the simple discipline of measuring the Earth and turned it into a psychotic dream world of geometric monstrosities — geometric entities that we tend to believe are real, but that nonetheless do not truly exist. To cure the modern world’s insanity of geometry, we must look very closely at these Euclidean entities.

*“The unexamined life is not worth living.”*

— Socrates

The idea back in Euclid’s day was that there was a kind of “perfect” world above our commonly experienced world of outward appearances. This higher (or inner) world was a place of pristine mathematics and geometric symmetry. A higher intellectual “plane” of existence. A perfect world inhabited by perfect harmonies, perfect shapes, and perfect beings.

Euclid wasn't the only one who believed in perfect geometric entities. Plato is the most famous philosopher to posit the existence of a higher, abstract world of true forms. This higher plane of existence was a realm of "pure" shapes like the equilateral triangle, the square, and the circle. The so-called Platonic solids were also said to exist, somehow, on this plane: the tetrahedron, the hexahedron (the cube), the octahedron, the dodecahedron, and the icosahedron. A shape like the tetrahedron (a four-sided pyramid) was considered "perfect" because it had symmetry and because each of its facets was identical to all the others.

Just for a moment, you might want to think about Plato's criteria for perfection. How do symmetry and repetition make a tetrahedron "perfect"? What is perfection, really? Does it exist? And if perfection exists, is it characterized by...predictability?

Plato's perfect world of true forms, as we will soon see, is not really what the Greek philosophers thought it was. It's actually a byproduct of trauma. A delusional dream world of imaginary perfection. A place where we hide from all of the "imperfect" and troublesome things that have happened to us in the real world. For most of us, this

hiding place has become a prison, and the linear geometric forms within it, when we don't see them for what they are, have become our jailors.

Let's flashback to middle-school geometry class and meet these supposedly perfect entities all over again. Only this time, we'll scrutinize each one and consider whether we have actually had the pleasure of meeting one in real life.

### The Point

One of the first meditations that I give my students involves visualizing a geometric point. I quote the exercise for them straight out of a famous occult textbook, without giving any interpretation. Because I don't interpret it for them, it's the one exercise I get the most questions about:

- Let the neophyte consider a point as defined in mathematics — having position but no magnitude — and let him note the ideas to which this gives rise. Concentrating his faculties on this, as a focus, let him endeavor to realize the immanence of the divine throughout nature, in all her aspects.\*

Can you visualize a geometric point? You might want to try the exercise yourself so you can see why so many people get flustered.

The exercise's definition of a point, as having a position with no magnitude (no thickness), is accurate. A geometric point is a coordinate. It occupies zero dimensions. It has no size, no width, no depth, no area, and no volume. Logically speaking, this makes it not only invisible but also *non-existent*. And yet the exercise invites you to visualize it. That's literally impossible.

But therein lies the “point” of the point meditation. Students are confronted directly with the insanity of geometry. The only effective way to visualize this abstract geometric entity is to tweak the rules of the exercise. You've got to be sneaky about it and imbue your point with at least a tiny amount of symbolic width, thereby turning it into a *dot*. And that's not all. You've got to catch yourself in the act of doing this — and realize the implications.

The exercise is essentially a *non-literal* visualization, and students who have their wits about them will find themselves confronted with their own non-literal mode of

perception. In order to do the point meditation without going mad, they have to enter a simplified fantasy world of symbols. In this case, a dot appears in the imagination, and this dot gets used as a *symbol* for the point. Obviously, a dot is not the same thing as a point.

If all goes well, students begin to realize that they live in a Euclidean dream world. They have a peculiar non-literal mode of perception that's operating "behind the scenes" all the time. For some students, this leads to a glimmer of realization, and they begin to wake up to how the mind works. Other students, however, get lost in a world of intellectual abstractions for a while, choosing to explore Plato's higher world of perfect forms as though it's the mind of God.

What do I mean by "non-literal"? This term simply means "not as it actually is." Your non-literal mode of perception involves your mind creating a fake, simplified version of the world, rather than just seeing the world itself. This non-literal version of reality is an impostor. A counterfeit version of the universe created automatically by your mind. You don't create it deliberately. You get duped into creating it.

What is this counterfeit version of the world made out of? Abstractions. An abstraction is a super-simplified version of whatever you happen to be looking at. When you look at a tree, for example, what are you really looking at? "Tree" is a generalized category in the mind. A geometrically delineated compartment which you label "tree." In other words, it's an abstraction. All of your tree-like experiences tend to get filed there. There is no such thing as an actual "tree" anywhere in the world. And when you are aware of this, you can set aside your mental "tree" box and look. Really look. What is it that is actually there beyond your symbols and concepts? Beyond your matrix of fabricated mental compartments?

When you stop drawing lines around all that you see, when you stop separating every thing from everything else, when you stop keeping the world at bay behind an imaginary grid of geometry, things look different. The apparent objects of your perception burst forth in their full splendor. Is it possible to live this way all the time, seeing through the Matrix, allowing the entire universe to explode at you from whatever you happen to be looking at? Yes, it is. As you might guess, this mode of perception is what mystics refer to as enlightenment.

The geometric point and the line are just a couple of the abstractions we use to create our fake version of the universe. Other abstractions include planes, cubes, spheres, and so on. The mind automatically combines these non-existent entities to create a simplistic version of reality around itself. It does so in an attempt to shield itself from complexity and unpredictability. To “get a grip” and to “stay on top” of life in a wildly spontaneous universe. To hide from the universe as it actually is.

The most insidious thing about the Matrix is that it takes a lot of energy to maintain. The more you buy into it as your reality, the more energy your mind diverts toward creating it. The Matrix becomes an energy-sucking vampire. This is the true nature of the ego.

To new readers of *Forbidden Realms*, all of this might sound absurd. If so, you simply haven't practiced the point meditation enough. In ancient Taoist texts, this kind of meditation is called “turning the light around.” The mind turns away from outward appearances. It turns inward upon itself and catches itself in the act of creating the Matrix. Truly recognizing the ego and its artificially generated world involves turning to face the monster within. The wounded animal who unconsciously lashes out at the world by binding everything up in a frantic, control-freakish system of points, lines, and grids.

To the more seasoned readers of *Forbidden Realms*, our non-literal, symbolic mode of imagination may seem painfully obvious, especially now that I'm pointing directly at it, but the true value of such a realization runs even deeper than you might think. You've got to explore the point-meditation exercise for yourself and disappear “down the rabbit hole.” Don't just read about it.

## **The Line**

A line occupies one dimension. Like a point, a line has no thickness. But *unlike* a point, it has length. Infinite length, in fact. It proceeds straight on in two opposite directions, forever. Since a line has no thickness, it is by definition both invisible and non-existent. Just as we have discovered with the point, visualizing a line is also impossible unless you switch over to a symbolic representation of it. You can see it as a streak of ink, a pencil mark, a string, a wire, etc.

Have you ever met an actual line in real life? Of course not. That's impossible. Despite this obvious fact, students in middle-school geometry are expected to accept that such an entity is real. A geometry teacher might even put on an air of awe-struck reverence, describing this "perfect," "straight," and "infinite" creature — as though contemplating the infinite magnificence of something that does not exist is akin to contemplating the mind of God.

Outside of geometry class, we take some liberties with this Euclidean entity. We grab the perfect line that's defined in our textbooks and twist it. We bend it around physical objects so that we can imagine contours and measure circumferences. We trace arcs through the air to visualize trajectories. We draw squiggly lines on graphs so that we can worry about the ups and downs of product sales or website traffic. We draw lines in the sand to create enemies. We draw lines on maps and fight wars over them. A sorcerer draws a line around himself to create a magic circle. The namesake of this publication, *Forbidden Realms*, explores civilization's ultimate taboo of "crossing the line." And whether our lines are perfectly straight, curved into perfect circles, or winding and kinky, all the same, our lines have no thickness and no substance. They do not exist.



Are there any actual lines here?

## **The Plane**

This entity is going to be the most important one for our purposes here, as you will soon see. A geometric plane is also impossible to visualize. A plane occupies two dimensions. Just like a line, it has a length but no thickness. It is absolutely straight, and it goes on forever. Unlike a line, however, a plane occupies area. An infinite and perfectly flat area, in fact, proceeding in all four directions — north, south, east, and west — forever.

Since a plane has no thickness, it doesn't really exist in three-dimensional space, so it cannot be rightly described as an object. It is therefore not really possible to visualize a plane without lending it at least an infinitesimal amount of thickness. In the imagination, we use a substitute, such as a sheet of plastic wrap, to symbolize it. And hopefully we remain aware of this intellectual bait-and-switch, or else we'll end up believing that geometric planes actually exist "out there" somewhere, somehow.

In our imaginations, we do things to the geometric plane that help us make sense out of the physical world. We bend it. We drape it over the objects of our experience. We stretch it to conform to the perceived contours of the world around us. This allows us to live in a world of surfaces, and as a result, the discipline of topology is invented. Not to mention calculus.

### **The Insanity of Conventional Sanity**

A world without lines can be a little upsetting to civilized adults. But we are quite capable of defending ourselves against such an upset. We can simply pretend that the lesson we learned in art class is useless. Just a childish playtime version of the universe, right?

Sure, it's reasonable enough to show students that lines don't really exist, but what does that matter when it's far easier to retreat into a tiny corner of the mind, into a perfect little ego cubical, and repress our perception of the strange non-linear world "out there." Inside civilization's tiny prefab box in our heads, we spend tons of energy maintaining the lines drawn around us. So much energy, in fact, that we sometimes become ill and have no life force left to deal with the world as it actually is.

You might begin to see how this retreat into "the box within" is actually a fear response. A primordial reflex reaction to life in an uncertain world. A knee-jerk defense against the unpredictability and spontaneity of nature. For most people, it ends up becoming a resistance to life itself. We have a subtle, all-pervasive fear of letting go of the Matrix. Our points, lines, and grids are important to us because.... Well, how else are we supposed to maintain order unless we allow our minds to auto-delineate all of the various "objects" in the world around us? How else are we to contain the chaos? The madness?

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*"What wonder that across the earth a great architect went mad..."*

— H.P. Lovecraft

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### **The Infinite Coastline**

To undo the Matrix that is holding us prisoner, let's blast through it with a simple thought experiment. We'll do an exercise inspired by one of the books in my library: *Chaos: Making a New Science* by James Gleick. As we will later see, this exercise can be converted into a Tantric meditation technique.

Lets visualize the coastline of Florida. How long is it? According to a Congressional Research Report, it is 1,350 miles.\* According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, it is 8,436 miles.\*

How is such a large discrepancy possible? Simple. The shorter measurement uses a line that was drawn differently. The line that was drawn *farther* away from shore is *shorter* than the line the was drawn right up against the shore.

What? That's impossible! A circle with a wider diameter must have a greater circumference than a circle with a narrow diameter. A larger square must have a longer perimeter than a smaller square. If you draw a line around an object at a greater distance, then naturally, that line should be longer than one drawn up close, right? The logic is inescapable. Well, just remember that circles and squares do not truly exist. In the actual world, the reverse is true: the more closely you delineate an object, the longer its perimeter becomes.

Let's examine this disturbing paradox.

If I were to measure the coastline of Florida myself, I'd be lazy about it. I'd simply board a boat at the northern end of the East coast, at Fernandina Beach. I would pilot the boat south, keeping the beach in sight the whole way.

As I proceed, I would notice that there are numerous inlets and river mouths. I would ignore these gaps in the coastline and keep my course steady. As long as I can see some kind of shore, I'm good to go.

After a lengthy journey south, I would round the southern tip of Florida's mainland where I would be confronted by a series of islands: the Florida Keys. Uh-oh. How am I supposed to include islands? They are part of Florida too, aren't they? Well, let's just keep them in sight and do our best, rounding them all as though they are all one big, solid landmass. (You may already begin to see the amount of pretend that has to happen when we apply geometry to the real world.)

Eventually I will round the southern-most tip of Florida at Key West and proceed back to the northeast, keeping the Keys in sight to my right. I would then head north to Tampa Bay. I won't pilot my boat into that bay. I'll simply ignore it, pretending that the coastline of Florida "glosses over" it. I proceed onward, continuing to ignore all other bays, lagoons, inlets, and rivers along the way. Eventually, I end up offshore from Perdido Key, where Florida meets Louisiana. My journey is complete.

Checking my GPS tracking system, I see that my trek along the Florida coast was about 1,300 miles. That was simple enough.

Okay, now let's strap our GPS tracking system to the back of a mouse. This mouse is going to work much harder than I did. She's going to measure the length of Florida's coastline by crawling along its edge.

We set our mouse down at the edge of the water on Fernandina Beach. We are immediately confronted by the fact that the advancing and receding ocean waves make Florida's coastline fluctuate constantly, like a giant undulating amoeba. This terrorizes our mouse as she runs back and forth from the waterline to avoid getting overwhelmed by the surf and swept out to sea. No matter. We will simply freeze time to make the ocean hold still.

As our mouse proceeds, she zig-zags a lot. It turns out that the shoreline right next to the ocean is much more jagged than we ever imagined when we were piloting our boat out at sea.

Our mouse also has to deal with lots of little ups and downs, but we will simply ignore the vertical dimension, only accounting for the distances traversed along an imaginary horizontal plane (a plane that is curved into a slightly convex shape, of course, to mimic the curvature of planet Earth).

And what is our mouse supposed to do when she comes to an inlet? Well, let's just have her follow the shore into the mouth of the waterway for a hundred feet or so. She then jumps into the water, swims across the inlet, and continues her journey southward, winding along the ocean's edge as before.

When she gets to the Florida Keys, we suddenly realize that we need more mice. So we assign one extra mouse to circumscribe each island, crawling along the water's edge there, just as our mainland mouse is doing. When our mainland mouse completes her journey, we will simply add the length of her route to the routes of all the other mice who measured Florida's islands.

As you might guess, the combined journey of all our mice adds up to well over 16,000 miles! That's curious. Our boat journey contained an area that is larger than the area measured by our mice, and yet the line that was right up next to the shore is much, much longer.

We can retire our mouse now. She's worked hard enough. Let's recruit a new creature this time. Let's have a microbe slither along the coastline.

As you can guess, a microbe's adherence to the shoreline would involve many more tiny zigs and zags. It would have to dance around or between zillions of grains of sand. The smaller the traveler, the more convoluted the journey. The microbe's journey would probably be well over a million miles — if such a journey even makes sense anymore.

Next, let's retire our microbe and recruit a single hydrogen atom (the smallest atom in the universe, according to particle theory). At this level of scale, the length of Florida's coastline becomes meaningless. Every infinitesimal step of the atom's journey involves an "inlet." For a hydrogen atom, Florida's coastline is completely riddled with gaps. In fact, it is almost all gap and no substance. Or rather, Florida is mostly just empty space, constellated by tiny "molecule islands" that are so small we can't even imagine them.

To get a clear measurement, our hydrogen atom would have to cross a near infinite number of gaps, or perhaps circumscribe every single molecule of Florida, as though each molecule were one of Florida's islands.

Each molecule is likewise made up of smaller bits. Molecules are made of atoms; atoms are made of protons, electrons, and neutrons; and these subatomic particles are made up of yet more sub-subatomic particles — that is, if we take the reductionist semantics of quantum physics seriously. To make things even more chaotic, none of these super-miniscule entities has any definite boundary. They don't sit still long enough for us to observe any edges. And if we could freeze time and make them hold still, would we find anything there at all?

The principle should be clear by now, of course. The further we increase our magnification upon any object in the real world, the longer its perimeter becomes. The closer we get to accuracy, the closer we verge upon infinity. And of course, any attempt to measure Florida in any absolute sense reveals to us very quickly that Florida does not truly exist!

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*"Stop weaving a net about yourself. Burst like a lion from the cage."*

— Hakim Sanai

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### **How Long Is Your "Coastline"?**

This principle applies to you too. You can draw a line around your body and measure the length of your perimeter. Or better yet, let's drape a geometric plane over your body to measure its surface area. We can bend and stretch the plane to fit snug up against your outer contours and then compute how many square inches of skin you have.

How snug would you like it? We can make it conform to your body so closely that it sinks into the pores of your skin and maps out the interior of each pore. Or we can even increase our magnification further to involve individual cells. Or molecules. At the atomic level, your body is actually made more of gaps than of actual substance. Your body isn't just "full of holes." It is completely invaded by space. It has no true boundaries. It is, in fact, boundless.

With this thought experiment, you can see what begins to happen. Your body begins to shine forth as it actually is. As a phenomenon that cannot truly be contained by curved lines and contour-conforming planes. At our greatest conceivable level of magnification, any object we examine is little more than empty space. It seems to levitate before our eyes as some kind of apparition.

Does this mean your body is infinite?

Not so fast. Let's look at the word "infinite" closely. "Infinite" simply means "not finite." It doesn't necessarily refer to something that "goes on forever." That would be a linear abstraction, and as we have already established, lines do not exist. "Infinite" simply means that your body has no limit. That it defies our efforts to measure it. A body that is boundless and endless is not the same thing as a body that goes on forever in any particular direction. Perhaps the body does have some kind of "limits," but those limits cannot be measured via the insanity of geometry.

There's another disturbing insight to be gained from these thought experiments. The world around you has no surfaces in it. A surface is essentially an imaginary, two-dimensional Euclidean plane that has been draped over — and stretched to conform to — the imaginary contours of a perceived object. But as we've already seen, the higher the level of magnification, the more convoluted the supposed surface area becomes, until finally it disintegrates before our eyes and we fall into a quantum abyss.

What we are discovering here is that the entire discipline of topology is pure fiction. When we measure nature, we avoid looking directly at her. We cover her up with a counterfeit surface-version of reality. Most adults are not aware that they are doing this, of course, and they wander through the world, lost. Trapped inside a Euclidean dream world.

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*"By itself a body is just a sack with holes in it, a broken jar..."*

— Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag

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### **The Fear/Desire Matrix**

If Euclidean entities such as lines and planes don't really exist, and if there isn't really any perfect, higher world where Platonic solids bask in divine perfection, then what

are these geometric entities, really? Where did they come from? How did we dream them up?

You've, no doubt, heard the cliché "The shortest distance between two points is a line." When you examine this saying closely, you'll note that it doesn't make sense unless there is a real-life scenario built around it. When you're planning a trip, for example, you usually choose the shortest route, right? You *simplify* the trip as much as you can. When a young man is at a nightclub, the most confident route to an attractive woman is a straight line. If she notices him and gives the right signals, he will approach. When a hunter out on the savannah is wary of lions hiding in the grass, he can't help but feel straight lines converging inward at him from all sides. These are the possible routes a charging lion might take as it makes its kill.

What this means is that geometric lines are not pure entities detached from nature. They are generated *by* nature. By our instincts. By a scheming nervous system that is under stress. The discipline of geometry is not a product of higher brain functions. It's actually a product of our baser instincts. A product of fear and desire.

If you'll remember from a previous [article](#), the stress response suppresses higher brain functions. Why does it do that? The brain, when it is fully functional, demands a lot of energy. But a body that is entering the stress response is capable of quickly redirecting energy away from our more expensive brain functions toward simpler survival-oriented functions: fighting and fleeing. The classic fight-or-flight response. There are actually four F's that tend to shut down the higher brain: fighting, fleeing, feeding, and fornicating. Each of these is essentially a stress-induced behavior.

Stress is induced by either fear or desire: a *fear* that something is going to harm you (like a predator or an approaching deadline) or a desire that springs from a sense of lack (like the need for food or the feeling that you are not complete without a mate). In mysticism, fear and desire usually take the blame for causing all of human suffering.

When the stress response kicks in, your brain's frontal lobes no longer get enough blood flow to deal with complexity, so the brain stem, hippocampus, and amygdala take over. Your brain ends up dismissing complexity. It instantly redefines the world in simplified terms. And *the most simplified kind of world it can conjure up is a geometric world*. A world where the shortest distance between two points is either an attack



vector or an escape route. Euclidean space is a fight-or-flight fantasy world. It is a stressed out way of looking at the universe.

The most bitter irony of humanity is that a biological mechanism that originally evolved for *saving* energy has actually ended up *consuming almost all* of our energy. And for what? To create a fight-or-flight dream world.

When we become aware of this, then we have exposed the various Euclidean entities for what they truly are: quick and dirty tricks conjured up by the stress response in its frantic attempt to impose order upon chaos.

The perfectly straight line, for example, becomes the line of desire between you and what you want. It has you “strung out,” as the saying goes. The graceful curve on an arc becomes the route of an incoming or outgoing projectile. A spear thrown by a hunter or a boulder hurled by a trebuchet. A magic circle protects its sorcerer from evil, or it expands his “sphere of power.” Love triangles complicate our domestic lives. Pyramids of stability. Solids of certainty. Lengths of effort. Volumes of hunger. Distances of thirst. Depths of despair. Heights beyond reach. Broad and narrow horizons. All of these geometrically abstract configurations are generated by stress.

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“While reason is still tracking down the secret, you end your quest on the open field of love.”  
— Hakim Sanai

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## The Pore-Breathing Exercise

Let's do an exercise that works with the geometric plane. We'll turn our coastline thought experiment into a Tantric meditation. This exercise comes from a previous [article](#), but now I'm modifying it based on our new insights about the insanity of geometry.

Lie on your back comfortably, in a somewhat "formal" position, as though you are a dead body in a coffin. Let all your muscles go limp. Utterly relax. Allow the mattress or mat beneath you to completely support your weight. There is no need to hold yourself up anywhere. Or to hold yourself together.

Now visualize a geometric plane hovering horizontally above you. It is absolutely flat, and it proceeds infinitely in all four directions: north, south, east, and west. Now, allow this plane to descend upon you. As it slowly sinks down, it bends and gently drapes itself over your body, conforming to the contours of your skin. It completely envelopes you, stretching easily, as though you are being wrapped in an impossibly thin sheet of plastic wrap. You can barely feel it.

This contour-conforming plane proceeds to settle into all of the nooks and crannies of your surface area. It proceeds to "map out" all of your contours with gradually increasing minuteness and perfection. As it does so, it descends into the millions of pores all over your skin.

The magnification increases. You eventually discern that the interior of each pore is like a little cave, the walls of which are composed of bumps. Each bump is an individual skin cell.

Breathe in through the nose. As the breath comes in, visualize the pores of your skin, millions of them, opening up to take the air deep into your body. Exhale through the nose (or the mouth if you like). As the breath goes out, see the pores exuding the air back out into the universe. At the end of each outbreath, let the lungs hang empty without breathing. Wait until the next slight urge to breathe kicks in, and then start the next breath cycle.

When the pores open to admit your breath, the two-dimensional surface that coats your body plunges into all of them. It plunges deep into the body's interior and continues to map out everything inside. The interior of your body is now like a sponge through and through, an endless maze of convoluted surface area, permeated through and through by the steady tides of the inbreath and outbreath. The mapping continues in finer and finer detail until each individual molecule of protein becomes defined. Eventually, you notice each atom. The breath continues to waft in and out of the utter depths of your being. It even penetrates between the atoms.

Do not concern yourself with whether this exercise is realistic. Visualize the spongy insides of your body permeated with air, even though you know that the body isn't really like that.

Now you are at the precipice! At the atomic level of magnification, the surfaces around and within your body are suddenly gone. They utterly dissolve. Your whole being is swallowed up in the quantum abyss. There is nothing left but a deep sea of tiny "stars," each star a sub-atomic particle.

There is no more surface world. No more geometry. You have drifted beyond the realm of boundaries. The whole body is a vast, empty "constellation" of a trillion stars — only *this* constellation has no connecting lines. Your breath continues to waft between the stars, through the depths of inner and outer space. You float in endless, light-infused darkness. A fathomless abyss, completely suffused with the energy of the incoming and outgoing breath. The space around you and the space within are one. There are no more sealed-off "compartments" anywhere anymore. There never were. All is open, exposed, naked, free. In and out... In and out...

Continue pore breathing this way, exploring the sensations of space and breath until fifteen minutes pass. You might want to set a timer for this exercise.

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*"Conserving their essence and nourishing their bodies, they attained to the marvelous virtue that characterizes heaven, earth, and man in their pristine state. And by following the principle of secreting their essence so that it ran out through the pores, they caused flesh and bone to be transmuted into a spiritual substance."*

— from *The Ancient Dragon and Tiger Classic*, a Taoist text\*

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## Scrying Exercise

Why do witches stare into crystal balls? Let's find out. One of the best substances used for scrying (seeing visions) is obsidian. Obsidian is black volcanic glass, and you can obtain it in a relatively large sphere for a hefty price. You can also buy a large chunk of smoky quartz for an even greater price. But no matter. You don't really need a crystal ball or an obsidian orb for scrying. You can simply use your smartphone.

Turn your smartphone completely off. Wipe off the glass to eliminate any smudges. Sit upright with your back relatively straight. Adopting the "posture of pure awareness" from *Forbidden Realms* [article #13](#) would be ideal. Set your smartphone on a pillow on the floor before you, or on a tabletop.

Gaze into the phone steadily. Keep your eyes relaxed and allow yourself to blink normally. The main rule of this exercise is to avoid looking away. Keep your eyes lightly focused on the blackness of the screen, and do not allow them to drift anywhere else. Practice the "dead breath" from [Article #2](#) of *Forbidden Realms*.

As you continue to gaze, you might begin to notice that bright areas in your field of vision become darker while dark areas become brighter. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by this. Continue to rest your gaze lightly and unwaveringly upon the black screen. Continue the dead breath.

Eventually, you might notice images rising. You might see faces, trees, or houses. You might see sexual imagery. Or a strange patchwork of animal forms.

For our purposes here, the most important kind of vision is that of a landscape. Notice how there is sometimes a tendency to see a patch of ground that proceeds onward into the distance, into a landscape populated with trees or mountains or buildings. This is your nervous system's stress response attempting to make sense out of the formless chaos of the blank viewscreen. It is replaying old, primordial scenarios.

Continue the dead breath pattern, and notice how your mind generates these landscapes. It drapes a two-dimensional plane over an imaginary realm beyond the "window" of your phone. Or perhaps it "maps" this plane over various objects that appear and disappear, such as strange faces or the corners of a room in a house you've

never seen before. Notice how the mind “sends out” this two-dimensional coating as it attempts to gain some kind of grasp or footing or sense of stability.

If you practice scrying regularly, you can get more and more familiar with this two-dimensional coating. Eventually, you can practice penetrating it or sinking beneath its surface. You can move your perspective into the screen of the phone, as though you are floating through a doorway. In the space on the other side of the black screen, sink beneath the surface of that imposed two-dimensional membrane. As you do so, feel the membrane simply dissolve. That shouldn't be much of a challenge anymore, since you now know that topological surfaces do not truly exist!

Alternately, you can practice “parting the veil.” Simply imagine a vagina-like opening appearing in the two-dimensional coating. It starts out as a mere slit, but then it widens into the shape of the gap that appears between two curtains as they are parted. Penetrate into this space and disappear into the beyond.

You can practice this for about twenty to thirty minutes at a time. Scrying is a Tantric form of meditation, and as you can see, it gives you the opportunity to work directly with the insanity of geometry. You can see beyond the outer garments of nature. See right through the Matrix. Disappear into enlightenment.

When the twenty or thirty minutes is done, spend some time “grounding yourself” by focusing on the sensations in your body, especially in your feet and posterior. Feel the weight of your body resting on the floor or the chair. Feel the weight of your feet on the floor.

*“Before your eyes, there are spread the fulfillment of all desire, the dominion of the world, the eternal reward of ritual, the shore where there is no fear, the greatness of fame in boundless spaces. With strength and wisdom, you have renounced them all.”*

— the Katha Upanishad

Throughout these articles in *Forbidden Realms*, I've repeatedly referred to the concept of “enlightenment.” One of the challenges with such a concept is that, well, we are dealing with a concept. Concepts are abstractions, and as you are likely to see by now,

abstractions aren't necessarily real. They are merely pointers toward reality, not reality itself.

This begs the question: Does enlightenment truly exist? Is it real? What is it like to be "enlightened"? It's touchy to explore this area because anyone who claims to know anything about it risks being dismissed as egotistical or delusional. It would appear that the topic of enlightenment itself is a forbidden realm — so that is where we will go in the next article.

Stay tuned!

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